# Claims

[001] A system comprising a plurality of instant messaging client applications (202, 207, 208, 209) communicating via a computer network (206) to send and receive messages in real time integrated with n-way teleconferencing capability via a telephone network (216).

[002] A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the system comprises: a plurality of instant messaging client applications (202, 207, 208, 209); an instant messaging server (204); and a teleconferencing server (210); all connected via a computer network (206); wherein the teleconferencing server (210) enables n-way telephone connections via the telephone network (216).

[003] A system as claimed in claim 2, wherein the teleconference server (210) includes communication means to send notifications to the instant messaging server (204) of the status of telephone connections during a teleconference.

[004] A system as claimed any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the instant messaging client applications (202, 207, 208, 209) have graphical user interfaces (400, 600) including means for displaying in real time details of participants of an n-way teleconference and the status of the telephone connections of the participants.

[005] A system as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the n-way telephone connections are to telephone apparatus of users of the instant messaging client applications (202, 207, 208, 209).

[006] A system as claimed in claim 5, wherein an additional telephone connection is to a telephone apparatus of a user (611, 615) who is not a user of an instant messaging client application.

[007] A system as claimed in any one of claims 4 to 6, wherein the graphical user interface (600) includes means for indicating a participant who is talking (608) at a given time in the teleconference, the means for indicating being activated in response to notification from the teleconference server (210).

[008] A system as claimed in any one of claims 4 to 7, wherein the graphical user interface (600) includes means for a user to input an indication (610) that the user wishes to speak.

[009] A system as claimed in any one of claims 2 to 8, wherein the teleconferencing server (210) uses a bridge (212) which interfaces with the telephone network (216) that interprets set up and control commands relating to a teleconference.

[010] A system as claimed in claim 9, wherein the teleconference server allows the system to utilise different network interfaces (238, 240, 242).

[011] A system as claimed in any one of claims 2 to 10, wherein the teleconference server (210) includes an interface (232) allowing an instant messaging client ap-

plication (202) to set up and control a teleconference.

[012] A system as claimed in any one of claims 2 to 11, wherein the teleconference server (210) includes a telephone profile service (230) for retrieving and storing telephone profiles, and a teleconference profile service (234) for managing teleconference profiles including policy information, pin numbers and port allowances.

[013] A system as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein one of the instant messaging client applications (202, 207, 208, 209) is a moderator of the teleconference and has a graphical user interface (400, 600) including control input means (605, 606, 607, 603, 604) for controlling the teleconference.

[014] A system as claimed in any one of claims 4 to 13, wherein the graphical user interface (400) includes means for providing a telephone number at (501, 512) which a participant can be connected for the teleconference.

[015] A method in which a plurality of users each with an instant messaging client application (202, 207, 208, 209) communicate in real time by instant messages via a computer network (206) and can be simultaneously connected by an n-way teleconference via a telephone network (216).

[016] A method as claimed in claim 15, wherein the method includes: a plurality of instant messaging applications (202, 207, 208, 209) communicating by instant messages via an instant messaging server (204) on a computer network (206); and establishing n-way telephone connections via a telephone network (216) using a teleconferencing server (210) on the computer network (206).

[017] A method as claimed in claim 15 or claim 16, wherein a user of an instant messaging client application (202) sets up and controls a teleconference by instant messaging communication with a teleconference server (210).

[018] A method as claimed in claim 17, wherein the user initiating the teleconference sends an instant message in the form of an invitation (510) to proposed participants of the teleconference.

[019] A method as claimed in any one of claims 15 to 18, wherein non-users of instant messaging applications can also participate in the n-way teleconference by dialling in themselves or being dialled in (612) by another participant.

[020] A method as claimed in any one of claims 16 to 19, wherein the teleconference server (210) notifies the instant messaging server (204) of the status of telephone connections.

[021] A method as claimed in any one of claims 15 to 20, wherein the method includes providing graphical user interfaces (400, 600) for the instant messaging client applications (202, 207, 208, 209) including displaying in real time details of participants of an n-way teleconference and the status of telephone connections of

the participants.

[022] A method as claimed in claim 21, wherein the method includes activating an indication (608) in the graphical user interface (600) of a participant who is talking at a given time in the teleconference, in response to a notification sent from the teleconference server (210).

[023] A method as claimed in claim 21 or claim 22, wherein the method includes a user inputting a telephone number (501, 512) in the graphical user interface at which they can be contacted for a proposed teleconference.

[024] A computer program stored on a computer readable storage medium, comprising computer readable program code means for performing the steps of: providing an instant messaging client application (202) for communicating with other instant messaging client applications (207, 208, 209) by instant messages delivered via an instant messaging server (204) on a computer network (206); providing an extension to the instant messaging client application (202) for enabling teleconferencing using a teleconferencing server (210) on the computer network (206) enabling n-way telephone connections via the telephone network (216).

[025] A computer program stored on a computer readable storage medium, comprising computer readable program code means for performing the steps of: providing a plurality of instant messaging applications (202, 207, 208, 209) communicating by instant messages via an instant messaging server (204) on a computer network (206); and establishing n-way telephone connections via a telephone network (216) using a teleconferencing server (210) on the computer network (206).